



Cup giant killers plan an all-ticket

gate of 12,000 for that

Third Round tie against Middlesbrough

Wycombe will not switch grounds

By MICHAEL PLUMMER

ROTHMANS Isthmian League Wycombe Wanderers will not switch venues for their F.A. Cup Third Round tie with Jack Charlton's Middlesbrough and the game will go ahead at their Loakes Park ground, with an all-ticket 12,000 crowd.

This is more than 4000 below the club record gate, but chairman Jack Smethurst says the club not only want to keep faith with their fans by staging the game, but also want them to see the greatest day in the club's history in relative comfort.

Experience

Still recovering from Wycombe's heady replay victory at Third Division Bournemouth last night, Mr Smethurst doesn't see the result as a foregone conclusion.

"Against Third and Fourth Division sides, we always feel we have a chance. Even when Bournemouth scored an early goal last night, we always looked like snatching it.

"But when you get in the realms of the First Division, it's a different story. Mistakes are punished, and you can't afford to miss even half-chances."

But Mr Smethurst, the town's former police chief, who has been chairman for over 10 years—and a supporter for over 16—points out that the Wycombe side have their share of experience.

Defenders Alan Phillips and Gary Hand were in the Hendon side that gave Middlesbrough's North East rivals, Newcastle, such a fright last season and they boast half a dozen amateur internationals.

"We pride ourselves on our

professional attitude at Wycombe," said Mr Smethurst. "In the past few years several players have left us to join League clubs, including Viv and Martyn Busby, Dennis Edwards, John Delaney, Peter Suddaby, Paul Fuchillo and Ken Swain.

Encouragement

"And bear in mind we have lost at home only once in the last two seasons—and that to Peterborough in the Cup last season."

The Wycombe players, after their victory last night, had the

chance of a quick look at their next-round opponents—when highlights of Middlesbrough's League Cup replay at Manchester United were televised.

"I think this is the first time most of our lads have seen them play," said Mr Smethurst. And they could have wished for no better encouragement, as United stormed home 3-0.

Wycombe will stay at home

By John Davies

WYCOMBE, the happy Wanderers who knocked Third Division Bournemouth out of the F.A. Cup, aim to make things difficult for First Division Middlesbrough when they meet in the third round on January 4.

The amateurs have no intention of switching the tie to Ayresome Park. "Had it been a Midlands or Southern club, where we could have got there and back in a day, we might just have been tempted," said Wycombe's 38-year-old team manager Brian Lee yesterday.

The High Wycombe police are likely to peg the crowd to 15,000 and Wanderers have no doubt about it being a sell-out.

"But all my lads have their jobs to consider. They all had to do a morning's work on Wednesday for instance, before we set off for Bournemouth."

"As a result, we started late, ate our midday meal late, arrived late and then began the match badly when Bournemouth took the lead inside nine minutes."

"It shows the spirit of my lads that they were able to fight back and win. On paper, no one will give us much of a chance against Boro."

"Yet the Cup has an

uncanny knack of levelling things up. We have some good players in our side who could easily step into professional football. But they prefer to keep their own careers and enjoy their Soccer."

The 38-year-old Lee, director of Bisham Abbey Sports Centre, switched his attention to coaching when injuries shortened his playing career as a full-back with Port Vale.

"The League is more important to us than Cup glory," he claimed. "We are third in the Rothman's Isthmian League, having won the Championship three times out of the last four seasons."

Change

"Winning the League requires consistency and good football. The F.A. Cup is a pleasant change, but it is just a diversion."

"I shall either go to see Middlesbrough myself or send someone to watch them in the next couple of weeks. We are away in the League to Kingston on Saturday, then next week we shall take time out from the Christmas celebrations for one training stint on the Monday."

"The following Saturday we are at home to Sutton, and then I shall call the lads in two or three evenings the following week to build up for the Cup tie."